

WHITE PAPER
EVOLUTION OF THE LESSONS LEARNED (LL) CYCLE
REMEDICATION and PREVENTION/BEFORE ACTION REVIEW (BAR)

(U) The Joint Special Operations Command (JSC) Joint After Action Review Support Office (JAARSO) and the JSOC Remediation Officer (JRO) are working on what we believe will be the next evolution in the doctrinal lessons learned cycle -- remediation and prevention. JSOC is already getting traction from the incorporation of a dedicated and institutionalized remediation process in the JSOC lessons learned cycle of collect, analyze/produce, disseminate, and remediate. We have termed it Lessons Learned/Remediation or LL/R in an attempt to codify the synergy inherent between JAARSO and JRO. JAARSO and JRO believe the next logical evolution to LL/R is what we are calling "prevention" and/or "before action review" or "BAR" -- although the search for a more descriptive term continues.

"If our lessons learned programs do not result in issues resolved then they are worthless..."

*- Dean Shults
JSOC Senior Lessons Learned Analyst
at DoD WWLLWG (March 2009)*

(U) At the DoD Worldwide Lessons Learned Working Group (WWLLWG) semi-annual meeting in March 2009, faltering issue resolution and tracking mechanisms were a consistent theme. JSOC briefed its institutionalized remedial action program providing attendees with a potential systemic solution to the problem of issue resolution. Recognizing that there is no "one size fits all" solution within DoD; JSOC's program does provide a few ideas that can inform other programs: decision-maker ownership, dedicated full time position with access, work remediation within established staff processes, and co-location with lessons learned analysts.

(U) The JSOC Chief of Staff (CoS) owns the JSOC Remedial Action Program (JRAP) and designates key issues for remediation. Only the CoS determines an issue has been resolved.

(U) The JRO is dedicated to identifying, tracking, monitoring, facilitating, assisting action officers (AO) as required, and reporting the status of remediation actions. The JRO position requires seniority and credibility which ensures access to the Command Group, staff principles and action officers (AO) across the Command.

(U) The JRAP does not require AOs to learn a new system rather it is connected to normal JSOC staff processes. JRAP is designed to assist the AOs and make their job easier.

(U) The JRO is co-located with JAARSO. Daily access to the lessons learned analysts is a key to the success of the JRAP.

"Sharing our lessons learned so that others will not have to relearn them with equal hardship..."

*- COL Ron Russell
JSOC J7 (2003-2006)*

(U) Prevention/BAR answers one of the "so what?" questions of the lessons learned cycle. Its intent is to make the lessons learned cycle operationally relevant to specific ongoing and/or future operations and exercises. Rather than dissemination of "bulk" lessons learned, prevention/BAR aims to provide specific lessons learned and/or AARs that relate directly to a specific ongoing and/or future operation or exercise by providing the information to the executors/planners of the mission in a "push" fashion. Prevention/BAR requires the ability to push targeted and specific information preemptively to Commanders, staff directors, and/or action officers.

(U) The key to the proposed prevention/BAR part of the cycle is to get out in front of potential issues by providing targeted information to operational/exercise planners and operators based on review of previously identified lessons learned and remediation issues that pertain to the specific operation/exercise. JAARSO and JRO are already doing that systemically with exercises by getting involved up front in the exercise development process, providing input to training objective development, and identifying exercise focus areas. They are selectively involved in providing lessons learned and remediation issues to ongoing Joint Planning Groups (JPG) with the intent to inform their planning efforts with previously documented observations/issues/lessons/best practices and to assist in avoidance of and/or mitigation of previously identified problems.

(U) The success of initial JAARSO/JRO prevention/BAR efforts has had a positive effect -- JPGs are now actively requesting LL/R support. Upon notification of the establishment of a JPG or on receipt of a request for support from a standing JPG, the JAARSO sends a lessons learned analyst to the JPG. That analyst takes some generic LL/R data with him based on initial understanding of the JPG's purpose. Upon refinement of the JPG mission and as planning progresses, the JAARSO analyst updates the initial LL/R data based on more in-depth research and analysis by the JAARSO/JRO team. This reach-back capability allows the JAARSO/JRO to surge as required, do focused research, and provide LL/R data that is specifically tailored to assist in avoidance of and/or mitigation of previously identified issues relevant to the JPG mission.

(U) Remediation and "prevention/BAR" have helped make the LL/R process more relevant to JSOC. Although this implementation of LL/R is unique to JSOC, other SOF and General Purpose Force Commands might be able to take certain aspects and modify them to suit the needs of their own programs.

(U) As JSOC continues to codify remediation (or issue resolution) and "prevention/BAR" as a part of the lessons learned cycle, we will eventually look to propose doctrinal

changes to the CJCSI 3150.52D - Joint Lessons Learned Program, SOCOM Directive 11-3, and internal JSOC policies and functions manual.

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